

South East Asia: Floods

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The Disaster

Continuous monsoon rains since late July 1999, which meteorologists say are the heaviest in three decades, caused floods that seriously affected the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. Additionally, DPR Korea, China, and the Republic of Korea have experienced extensive flooding (see separate Federation Information Bulletins issued on each of these countries). While floods have eased in recent days, weather forecasters warn of further rain, and authorities in Vietnam report that water levels in the Mekong continue to rise.

Philippines

The serious floods in Manila and five outlying provinces displaced 220,284 families comprising 1,051,692 people. As of August 9, 1999, most of the affected people have returned to their homes leaving over 10,000 families or 60,000 people still sheltered in evacuation centres in Pangasinan, Bulacan, Pampangan and Tarlac provinces. A total of 50,000 families remain affected by the floods.

Vietnam

The Southern province of Binh Thuan was worst affected. Thirty people were killed and 3,700 families displaced. About 20,000 hectares of prime agricultural land was washed away. Although local flood waters have receded, latest reports from UNDP/Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development say that the water level on the Mekong River system continues to rise.

Cambodia

Heavy rains have flooded all communes in the coastal district of Kampot. Water levels remain high (about one metre in most places). Waters in the Prek Toek Chou river remains at danger levels. Most of Kampot's population of 527,904 people are affected. In Kompong Bay district, all five communes were affected, in addition to 17 other communes in Dong Tong, Kompong Tract and Chhouk districts. About 500 people were evacuated in Khoh Slaa village in Chhouk province. Many people remain stranded on roof tops, with limited numbers being evacuated by boats.

Thailand

Floods in Chantaburi province left six people dead and one person missing. A further 90,700 people were evacuated. The local authorities, assisted by Thai Red Cross, provided relief assistance and shelter (see Information Bulletin No. 1 issued on 4 August, 1999).

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross National Societies in Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines and Cambodia (assisted by the country delegation and the Kuala Lumpur Regional Delegation) responded with assessment missions, relief supplies and longer term interventions in disaster mitigation.

Philippines

The PNRC mobilised its disaster response teams in Manila and five outlying provinces to work with local authorities to assist the worst affected. Over 9,000 families have received PNRC food assistance. NGO's and a TV station helped raise funds for the National Society to assist flood victims. While most of the affected people in metro Manila have returned home to damaged houses, over 60,000 people remain sheltered in evacuation centres in the provinces where flood waters remain at high levels.

Cambodia

The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), assisted by the Federation, carried out evacuations and followed up with extensive assessments. The National Society, working closely with the government's National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), is providing emergency household kits (including mosquito nets, agricultural tools and sheeting) as well as the rehabilitation and improvement of water supplies (working closely with donors such as ECHO). Branch capacity is being strengthened in order to implement measures in disaster mitigation in readiness for further floods. On behalf of the CRC, the Federation launched an Emergency Appeal for CHF 1.3 million on 11 August.

Vietnam

The Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) conducted a detailed assessment and released US\$ 8,000 from reserve funds for the Binh Tuan Branch to assist 5,000 affected families. The central government had earlier released US\$ 357,000, mainly for infra-structure repair and emergency food rations. The National Society also distributed 180 MT of rice and household items.

Thailand

The Thai Red Cross continues to assist the worst affected, and despite the current severity of the floods in Chantaburi, the National Society has adequate resources to meet the needs.

Needs

The relief stocks of each Red Cross National Society have been depleted. While the operation in Thailand is now over, the VNRC is appealing for support locally, the PNRC is requesting funds and materials to replenish its stocks, and the CRC has appealed internationally for both relief and rehabilitation activities.

Philippines

In addition to the depleted PNRC emergency relief supplies which now need re-stocking, supplies of rice, noodles, dried fish, and sardines are needed for distribution to 60,000 people for one month in five of the worst affected provinces. The victims also need kitchen utensils, bedsheets and floor mats. The PNRC has accepted limited supplies from local authorities, which will have to be either paid for or reimbursed at a later date. The PNRC and ECHO representative visited the affected areas on August 10. The PNRC/Federation may apply to ECHO for funding

to assist 10,000 affected families. The Federation and the PNRC are currently discussing whether an international appeal will be launched.

Vietnam

The VNRC and the Federation are requesting financial support, both through ECHO and through donors based in Vietnam, to provide food aid, emergency kits and house reconstruction materials (200 houses).

Cambodia

The Emergency Appeal for CHF 1.3 specifies that support is needed in the form of 7,000 emergency household kits, water purification, well rehabilitation and health education. Measures will also be taken to strengthen the CRC's capacity in disaster management in Kampot province.

Thailand

There are no outstanding needs at this time.

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